



October 30, 2014

The Honorable Steven Leonardis and Town Council of Los Gatos

From: Veterans Memorial & Support Foundation of Los Gatos

Subject: **Tribute to Freedom Proposal Request for the Town of Los Gatos**

Dear Mayor Leonardis, Vice Mayor Jensen and Members of the Town Council of Los Gatos,

On November 5, 2012, the Town Council of Los Gatos voted unanimously to reserve three adjacent prominent spaces at the Town Civic Center for consideration for placement of a veterans memorial and voted to support our plan to solicit artists for a tribute to America's service members and veterans in the Town of Los Gatos.

On March 1, 2013, Town Manager Greg Larson held a Town stakeholder brainstorming session with the primary users of the Civic Center space. The participants described the current Civic Center as "uninviting", "barren", "soul less", "hot", "lots of heat yet has a cold feel", "unfriendly", "unusable", and "under-utilized". They said they wanted Civic Center to be a place described as: "enriching: historical, cultural, educational", "used and bustling", "impressive – a destination where people want to go; a place where we'd be proud to take friends;" "inviting", "green, shade, comfortable and soft".

A great deal of effort was expended in an effort to attain our foundation objective and in support of the needs of the Town. Over the two years that followed, the Foundation Committee executed local and national campaigns to solicit artists and implemented a formal Artists Call to Arms Challenge that was juried by Committee members. The artist/artist teams submitted professional resumes, applications, photos of prior works of art, design renderings and their proposal in response to the Artists Call to Arms Challenge. Four top artist teams presented their proposals to the Committee. The four contenders were later reduced to two finalists who received and responded to additional requests on behalf of the Committee. The Foundation Committee ultimately chose its preferred design of choice in September 2014. The Foundation Committee has been reviewing the designs with members of the community over the last sixty days. It is our goal to now bring our results to you.

The Foundation desires an opportunity to present the results of our work to the Town at the upcoming Town Council meeting. In doing so, we request approval for the following:

- A) The construction of the Veterans Foundation of Los Gatos' desired design for a tribute to freedom/veterans memorial at Civic Center. This would include the upper plaza area as well as a walkway from Main Street to the Civic Center Plaza.
- B) A \$20,000 grant in seed money to proceed further with conceptual/municipal drawings and engineering validation.
- C) The waiver of any permitting fees.

Our preferred design for first choice is:

#### **Guardians of Liberty**

##### Design Elements:

- The focal point is a lit bronze statue of a U.S. military service member with eagle and reflective spire with an artificial eternal flame in the background situated on a rubble pedestal in the center of a mist fountain;
- A granite faced mist fountain that recognizes the branches of the military along with historical descriptions;

- Four low-maintenance arbors situated beyond the existing fountain area that would provide greenery, cooling, shade and seating;
- A path containing dedicated bricks and pavers from Main Street to the Civic Center with ground and tree lighting for nighttime enhancement;
- Signage that announces Civic Center and directs Civic Center visitors to the various Town Departments and Guardians of Liberty;
- Granite or bronze bas-reliefs for brick walls as follows:
  - Town Clerk and Town Manager Executive Office wall to the left of the Plaza landing dedicated to recognizing Veterans.
  - Police Headquarters wall to the right of the Plaza landing dedicated to recognizing major Donors.
  - Police Headquarters Pageant Way stairway entrance wall dedicated to recognizing First Responders.
  - Museums Pageant Way stairway entrance wall to recognize historical events in Los Gatos' military history.

We believe this design delivers the conceptual design benefits that follow:

- Creates positive portrayal for sacrifices made by service members/veterans and first responders.
- Transforms the Civic Center plaza to fulfill the desired future goals for the stakeholders in the March 1, 2013 brainstorming meeting by aesthetically enhancing the plaza with providing an artistic focal point, greenery, shade, a direct path to the Civic Center from Main Street, lighting for security and a dramatic nighttime public display.
- *Shared* space - honors and respects local Los Gatos who have served the duality of their country and their community. They have defended a virtue of *shared importance* to Americans – freedom, and have also contributed to our local community.
- The newly designed plaza provides a multi-functional urban space for civic ceremonies and reclaims an under-used important public setting – an inviting location where citizens can relax, attend art gallery showings and cultural events, host book club meetings and listen to music.
- Provides a venue for celebrating patriotic holidays, which in turn serve as a catalyst for educating the community of Los Gatos on the sacrifices borne by those who have served America.
- Distinguishes and magnifies the Civic Center prominence drawing many local citizens and visitors to this attraction by creating another reason to frequent the Civic Center, increasing public exposure to the Museums Library and the downtown area.
- Los Gatos is a sophisticated town with a small town feel. The Guardians of Liberty includes the bald eagle, an iconic American symbol of great strength, majestic appearance and freedom. This symbol, by association, augments the Town's brand and characteristics with a patriotic theme of honor, respect and gratitude for America's veterans and the freedoms they defend on behalf of the people of the United States who have the privilege to enjoy daily in America.

The Veterans Foundation of Los Gatos recommends immediate approval of the Guardians of Liberty conceptual design for Los Gatos' ***Tribute to Freedom***. Town Council's endorsement of this proposal is the first step to fulfilling the community's obligation to honor, respect and support those who have served to protect the freedoms the people of the United States have the privilege to enjoy daily in America.

Sincerely,

Members of the Veterans Memorial & Support Foundation of Los Gatos

The Veterans Foundation of Los Gatos is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) foundation dedicated to honoring and supporting both U.S. military veterans, the men and women of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines and Coast Guard and their families. The mission of the Veterans Foundation of Los Gatos is to:

- Build a tribute to America's U.S. military service members, veterans and first responders who are defenders of our freedom;
- Honor all U.S. military service members & veterans, past, present & future;
- Educate the community;
- Provide humanitarian support.

